



News from

Council President Todd Gloria

City of San Diego ▪ District Three

Friends,

You are invited to my first community coffee of 2013 this Saturday, February 23 from 10:00 – 11:30 a.m. at the Hacienda Hotel in Old Town, located at 4041 Harney Street. I hope you will join me for a casual conversation about hot topics in your neighborhood.

Coffee with the Council President
Saturday, February 23, 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.
Hacienda Hotel in the Prado Room, 4041 Harney Street
Old Town

Our Lady of Peace Lawsuit

One of the first major issues to come before the City Council after I was elected in 2008 was the proposed renovation project for the Academy of Our Lady of Peace (OLP). Sharing the concerns of neighbors, I opposed the project, and the City Council denied its approval in early 2009. Last Tuesday, I remained steadfast in my opposition to the project when the City Council voted in Closed Session to authorize full and for final settlement of a lawsuit with OLP.

It has always been my desire that OLP would revise their Modernization Plan so that it preserved the community character without removing or damaging the historic resources. I have remained consistent in advocating this position, as well as my opposition to the project as proposed by OLP through two Council hearings, a deposition, a cross-examination at trial, and four closed session meetings, including the hearing last week on the settlement.

The Closed Session vote, which I opposed, reflected a business decision by the supporting members of the Council and the Mayor to take a settlement offer that had been reduced from \$5.6 million down to \$500,000.

The settlement provides an opportunity to move two historic homes, whereas OLP had petitioned the court to be able to demolish the homes on site. There is now an opportunity to relocate them, and I'm glad that the City's Real Estate Assets Department is investigating potential City-owned sites on which the homes may be appropriate.

Had this case moved forward on appeal, everything that the jury determined, like the finding that the City's denial of the plan unfairly burdened OLP's right to religious exercise, the Court of Appeal would have taken as facts.

It is important to note that the case does not constitute a published decision; it does not set precedent, meaning that it can't be used to decide other cases. The case will be dismissed when the City has complied with all conditions. If the City had continued with the appeal, we would have run the risk of it becoming a precedent setting case.

The efforts of OLP will forever change the character of the neighborhood and have soured the relationship between the school and its neighbors. I wish the outcome had been different but am proud to stand with my constituents and oppose this project from beginning to end.

Tourism Marketing District: Why You Should Care

If you've been keeping up with the news, you have likely heard something lately about the Tourism Marketing District's (TMD) future. The TMD was founded in 2008 in response to the City's dire financial situation and the lack of funding to promote tourism. It has been a partnership between the City and the hospitality industry through which hotels are self-assessed to fund marketing and promotion efforts for San Diego, and for local special events. In addition to contributing funding for events like the Holiday Bowl, the TMD's promotional efforts have drawn visitors to our City. This equates to Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) revenue, on which the City depends to help fund core services like police, fire-rescue, and libraries. And having more visitors in San Diego also means that the tourism industry and the many businesses related to it remain strong economic generators and job creators.

Unfortunately, the future of the TMD is now at risk. Last year, the City Council approved the renewal of the TMD by a vote of 7-1 to preserve this successful program and its positive impacts on local residents, the City, and our economy. The Mayor opposes the implementation of the TMD agreement unless additional revenue is given to the City and hotel workers' wages are increased. As the son of a former hotel maid, I could not more strongly favor better compensation and improved working conditions for tourism industry workers, and would support that goal if it were pursued directly. Further, I have been outspoken on the topic of the need for more revenue for the City, but the TMD is funded through an assessment on hoteliers for the specific purpose of promoting events and tourism in San Diego; state law prohibits the use of these funds for general civic purposes.

Instead of improving conditions for workers and getting more money for the City, sequestering the TMD could result in job losses in the tourism industry, as well as less TOT for the City's General Fund if fewer people come here. In 2012, tourism was San Diego's second largest traded economy. We welcomed 32.3 million visitors who contributed to an economic impact of \$18.3 billion, generated \$151 million in City TOT, and employed 160,000 San Diegans.

San Diegans want progress and practical decision-making based on principles. Moving forward with the Council's approval of the TMD is right and necessary now.

The City Council will discuss the impact of the TMD at our meeting on Monday, February 25 at 2:00 p.m. All meetings are open to the public, and your input is welcome on this and all other topics.

The Latest on the Plaza de Panama

The City Council will also soon consider our options related to the future of Balboa Park. Because of a judge's ruling early this month, the pedestrian-focused Plaza de Panama renovation project approved last July cannot move forward. We also are left with a Balboa Park Master Plan and [Precise Plan](#) that cannot be implemented. Quite simply, we have to do something. I have asked the City Attorney to provide the City Council with guidance on what our options are at this point. It has been suggested that we could amend the Municipal Code identified by the judge, which would allow the Plaza de Panama project to proceed. We could also remove the project from the Balboa Park Master Plan and Precise Plan. As I await the City

Attorney's input on this complex issue, I ask all San Diegans to respect the passion of all sides and remember that we all want what is best for our City's crown jewel.

Budget Season is Upon Us

I'm proud of the work we have done at the City to create a budget development process that is far more inclusive of citizen suggestions. Now in my third year as Chair of the City Council's Budget and Finance Committee, I am again asking for your input as I compile my list of priorities for the Fiscal Year 2014 budget. If you are hesitant to participate, please remember that it is because of input from neighbors that the City has recently reinstated our tree trimming program.

Send your suggested funding priorities to my Budget and Policy Advisor, Pamela Ison, pison@sandiego.gov, or email them directly to me. In order to ensure proper consideration is given to your input, please send them in by March 1.

Your ongoing participation in the budget process is helpful, and I will keep you updated of other ways you can be involved.

Rain Brings Potholes (and Sinkholes)

City crews worked tirelessly yesterday to repair a water main break and sinkhole in East Village, and we were all reminded of the importance of proper infrastructure investment and maintenance. The water main that broke near 14th Avenue and F Street was installed in 1911. I think it's safe to say the City got its money's worth out of that pipe, but the ensuing mess is what we aim to prevent with increased infrastructure funding.

Whether you notice issues as big as a sinkhole or as seemingly minor as a pothole, please report it using the City's [online reporting tool](#) or by contacting my office. It's always best to address issues before they require major repairs and cause extreme damage and impacts to our neighborhoods.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Todd".

Todd

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